(c) the action taken by Central Registrar, MSCS to conduct the election on time and to declare BoD ineligible for continuation/further election as delegate/member of the Board?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes, Sir. As per the provisions of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002 and bye-law No. 23(ii) of the Kendriya Bhandar, it is the responsibility of the Board to conduct election of delegates of general body.

(b) and (c) The election to the representative general body of Kendriya Bhandar was held in September, 1999 for a period of three years from the date of election or till their successor are elected, if they have not ceased to be members in accordance with provisions of the bye-laws. *Vide* amended bye-law no. 14 as approved by the general body, and registered on 9th May, 2003, the term of the delegates to the general body was fixed for a period of 5 years. In the meantime, there was a dispute regarding membership of the Kendriya Bhandar agitated *vide* writ petition no. 8983-84 of 2005 before the Delhi High Court. On the direction of the High Court of Delhi in the above writ petition the Central Registrar decided the matter of membership *vide* order dated 8th December, 2006. The election to the delegates of general body have since been held in February, 2007. Further, Returning Officer is the competent authority to decide the issue of disqualification of the candidates under the provisions of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002, if election is not conducted in time. Also infirmity regarding conduct of election can be agitated as an election dispute under section 84(2)(c) of the Act.

Packages for Vidarbha and its monitoring

†*6. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of packages announced for the farmers of Vidarbha area of Maharashtra during the year 2006-07;

(b) the amount provided to the farmers of Vidarbha from these packages;

(c) whether any inquiry has been conducted by Government to ascertain that funds are reaching the farmers or not; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to enable farmers to get rid of debt and overcome any crisis they may face in the course of cultivation in the near future?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) During the year 2006-07, Government of India announced a rehabilitation package amounting to Rs. 3873.26 crore to mitigate the distress of farmers in six identified districts namely Akola, Wardha, Amravati, Buldana, Wasim and Yavatmal Vidarbha region of Maharashtra.

(c) The Government is keeping close watch over the actual implementation of the rehabilitation package to ensure that the intended benefits under the package reach the farmers. Implementation of the package is being closely monitored by the Government of Maharashtra at State, Divisional and District level. Besides, Government of India is also monitoring the progress regularly.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) Government of India constituted an Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Prof. R. Radhakrishna, Director, Indira Gandhi Institute of Devleopment Research, Mumbai to look into the problems of agricultural indebtedness in its totality and to suggest measures to provide relief to the farmers. The Expert Group has submitted its report to the Government in July, 2007 and the government has initiated the process of consultation on its recommendations.

Import of wheat

†*7. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the countries from where wheat is being imported by Government to meet the shortage of wheat in the country along with the quantity being imported from each country;

(b) the rate of wheat being imported;

(c) the reasons for not purchasing wheat from Pakistan and Australia;

(d) whether Government would ensure that the wheat being imported from America is free of weeds; and

(e) the quantity of wheat required for the country?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) Supplier-wise details of origin of wheat quoted and quantities offered are given below:

Name of Supplier	Country of Origin of Wheat	Quantity (+/-5%) in Lakh Tons
TOEPFER international, Asia, Singapore	Canada	2.56
CARGILL international, S.A., Singapore	Any country	1.30
RIAS Trading S.A., Switzerland	Russia	1.25
GRAND TOTAL:		5.11

The weighted average price of wheat is US$ 325.59 per ton, C&F(FO). Wheat of any country is eligible for import as per tender specifications and conditions.

(d) Only wheat meeting phytosanitary conditions will be allowed to be imported into the country.

(c) It is difficult to make an accurate estimate of demand for wheat for 2007-08. Estimates made by various agencies vary between 71 and 76 million tons. The demand

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.